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THE
"EMPRESS."

Historical Drama in Four Acts,

BY

BERNARD DIERKES.

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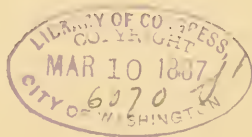


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Historical Drama in Four Acts,

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THE EMPRESS.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

MARIA THERESA, Empress of Austria.
COUNT BARTENSTEIN, Prime Minister of Austria.
COUNT WASNER, Ambassador of Austria to the Court of France.
COUNT GOTTER, Ambassador of Prussia to the Court of Austria.
DUKE FRANCIS, Husband of the Empress.
DOCTOR HAVERSACK, Medical Advisor of the Empress.
STANISLAUS BOSKAY, Hungarian Nobleman.
AGNES, Maid of Honor to the Empress.
JOSEPH AND FERDINAND, Two Austrian Soldiers.
FRED AND WILLIAM, Two Prussian Officers.
APPARITIONS.

Members of the Nobility, Soldiers, Hungarians, Pages, etc.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

(The castle garden of the Empress during Spring time. The chapel of the Empress in the garden. Enter a company of noblemen and nobleladies attired in festive dress. All freely move about. First nobleman addresses the company.)

Maria Theresa!—Empress of Austria since yesterday. Only on yesterday the illustrious daughter of Charles the Sixth assumed the reigns of government, and to-day we will pay our profound respects to our beautiful young sovereign, and renew our vow of allegiance to the House of Hapsburgh. Maria Theresa!—Only on yesterday a weak woman, and to-day all powerful. Well! so much for divine inheritance.

(First noble lady addresses the company.)

Ah, indeed! the glorious position now occupied by her Majesty is enough to make one quite envious. For why was not I, or any one of us called upon to reign, since we all have royal blood coursing through our veins.

(Second noble lady addresses the company.)

Yes, but our blood is not of the right kind. Only that blood which flows through the veins of the members of the Hapsburgh family can find its way to the throne of Austria.

(Second nobleman addresses the company.)

So you see, though our blood is very fine, it is not fine enough.

(First nobleman addresses the company.)

That ought to settle the bloody question. So far as I am concerned, I care very little about who is, or who is not the occupant of the throne. My chief desire at present is to know whether we will have as pleasant times under Maria Theresa, as we had under her good and jolly father Charles the Sixth.

(Third noble lady addresses the company.)

Why of course we will have even jollier times. Hunting, theatre, balls and elegant banquets. Ah! *(smacks her lips)* even now I have a foretaste of the good things to come.

(First nobleman addresses the company.)

Undoubtedly, it will be just as before. Who ever heard of a woman in high position ignoring the pleasures of life, especially at the Court of Austria. You may rest assured that the Empress is fond of pleasure and cares very little about affairs of State. That old bear, Prime Minister Bartenstein, will attend to all serious business. And now let us attend the audience of the Empress and then tra la! la! la! la! we will continue our round of pleasures. I will read the address of welcome. Long live Maria Theresa, our young Empress. *(All cry out)* Long may she live!

(Exit all arm in arm and dancing.)

(During the last portion of the above dialogue Minister Bartenstein enters unobserved. He listens and after exit of the company says:)

Ha! ha! ha! You are a charming set of barnacles and flatterers. Not a word you uttered has escaped my ear. That old bear, the Prime Minister, will attend to all serious business. He will, indeed, and the very first thing of a serious nature which will befall yonder company of good for nothing will be their prompt dismissal from Court, so that henceforth they will be obliged to depend upon themselves for support and will no longer be permitted to draw upon the imperial treasury to liquidate their accounts. Quite serious for persons having such fine royal blood. Ha! ha! very serious indeed. The Empress fond of pleasure and cares very little about affairs of State? Humph!—how little your shallow minds know about the qualification of her Imperial Highness. When on yesterday she for the first time sat in the midst of her aged and venerable ministers, it seemed to me as though the beauty and freshness of Spring had suddenly appeared in the midst of the ripeness of Autumn. The grace, the beauty, the gentleness and above all the maturity of her wisdom concerning affairs of State astounded everyone who listened to her. Yes, I have every reason to be contented with Austria's prospects. Furthermore I, a—oh, bother! always interrupted. Not a moment have I to myself. Yonder comes my eccentric friend, Doctor Haversack. He is a splendid physician with many queer habits. By nature very nearsighted and hence very suspicious. Old and not very handsome, and therefore always in love with his extreme opposite,—youth and beauty. Medical advisor of the Empress, and therefore always ready to throw in a little extra advise concerning affairs of State. In short, a very good and useful fellow in his place, but withal a little too officious, and at present decidedly unwelcome. However, what am I going to do about it? Here he is.

(Enter Dr. Haversack dressed in ludicrous and eccentric fashion. A large snuff box in his hand, his pocket full of manuscript. He advances towards Minister Bartenstein, looks at him very closely and finally recognizing him, speaks very rapidly in his usual manner.)

Good morning, good morning, Minister Bartenstein. How fares your high official pulse? I trust that you are well and not in need of medical advise. Ah, my! what a busy man I am. I am just on my way to the Empress who, I am sure, is in need of my services because of the great excitement she passed through on yesterday. I shall insist upon absolute repose. Repose, my dear Minister, is the best remedy after abnormal excitement. Moreover, my friend, you know that I am well versed in general history, and while her Majesty is reposing physically I will provide her with intellectual enjoyment by citing historic instances wherein great rulers have distinguished themselves for the good of their subjects, thus giving Her Highness learned and gentle hints how to do likewise. You see, my dear Minister, medicine,—in all modesty be it said,—medicine is not my only accomplishment. May I have the pleasure? (*Offers his snuff box.*)

(*Bartenstein.*) You say, medicine is not your only accomplishment, I sincerely wish it was.

(*Doctor.*) Ah, thank you. (*Aside*) Quite a doubtful compliment. But, really, I am a very busy man. You know, my dear Minister, I am also a student of the divine art, music. Here is my latest criticism concerning the opera as performed last evening. (*Gets out his manuscript.*)

(*Bartenstein aside.*) Great heavens! what have I done to be thus annoyed. He will surely want to read it.

(*Doctor.*) Of course anything flowing from my pen is necessarily of absorbing interest to the Court. I will give you a foretaste. (*Doctor begins to read.*) (*Bartenstein walks about impatiently; Doctor follows.*) On last evening the Opera house was filled to its utmost capacity. It was the occasion of Mlle. Vocalitini's first appearance. *Veni! vidi! vici!* She came, she saw, she conquered. (*Bartenstein falling into a chair, says:*)

Oh, saintly Job! thou patron saint of patience, deliver and sustain me.

(*Doctor.*) Why my dear Minister you are looking ill. What can I do for you?

(*Bartenstein.*) Only one thing. Don't let me taste any more of your powerful critique. It's too strong to take in large doses.

(*Doctor.*) Ah, thank you. (*Aside*) Quite a doubtful compliment. I am sorry your appetite for solid intellectual food is so limited. However, small doses at a time are more easily digested. I'll take great pleasure to continue the treat some other time.

(*Bartenstein.*) Thank you dear Doctor. I trust the interval will be as long as possible, say about six months.

(*Doctor.*) Ah, thank you. (*Aside*) Quite a doubtful compliment. But, really, friend Bartenstein, the Empress longs to see me, and though I know that I am always welcome in your presence, and that you regret my departure, yet must I away.

(*Bartenstein, aside.*) Yes, yes, I trust it will be far, far away.

(*Doctor.*) I must, I will go at once.

(*Bartenstein.*) Yes, I hope so.

(*Doctor.*) You hope so. Ah, thank you. (*Aside.*) Quite a doubtful compliment. (*To Bartenstein*) Your hope, Sir, shall be realized. Good morning, a very good morning, dear Bartenstein.

(*Exit Doctor, bowing profoundly.*)

(*Bartenstein returns the bow, saying:*) A very good morning, dear Doctor.

(*Enter Count Wasner.*)

(*Wasner.*) Ha! ha! it appears to be a very bad morning for eritics. I congratulate you upon your escape. The old man is a good doctor, but as a critique or statesman—the Lord deliver us from all like him. By the way, I have just seen a company of noblemen

and nobleladies apparently on their way to the audience chamber of the Empress. Who are they?

(*Bartenstein.*) I will tell you. They are members of the nobility. Persons of superfine royal blood. Their object is to congratulate the Empress upon her accession to the throne, and to offer themselves willing to continue in the service of the State. Great services they have rendered. The Empress is prepared for them.

(*Count Wasner.*) Well,—really, I do not understand.

(*Bartenstein*) Are you not aware that after the death of Charles the Sixth the whole Empire was found to be submerged in debt. Debts, heavy debts staring us everywhere in the face. The good old Emperor, may his soul rest in peace, was very kind, too kind, but alas, very negligent and reckless. Pleasure was his chief object. Theatres, hunting, balls and festivals without number swallowed the revenues which should have been applied in sustaining the Imperial army and other departments of the State. A large crowd of courtiers were in so called active service of the State, but their services consisted merely in dancing at the royal balls, attending the Imperial Theatre and hunting upon the royal hunting grounds. Every day was a continuation of dissipation. The Emperor was seemingly adored by a company of the most dangerous flatterers and hypocrites, and the very persons whom you have just seen, are they who have so shamefully played upon the weaknesses of our deceased Emperor, and who now have the effrontery to transfer their false and studied adoration from the father to his illustrious daughter, little dreaming that a most severe but just rebuke, and disgraceful dismissal from Court is in store for them. Yes my friend, let us fervently hope and pray that Maria Theresa's reign will be replete with blessedness for our beloved Austria. But one thought continually mars and darkens the bright picture which I so fondly drew upon the tablets of my imagination concerning Maria's prospective reign. The solemn covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction. Will it remain inviolate by the Powers who guaranteed its strict observance by royal signature and seal. Its possible violation is the dark thought that haunts me day and night.

(*Wasner.*) Nay, nay, Minister Bartenstein. Do not permit such thoughts to disturb your slumber. I have a little more faith in royal signatures and seals of State ; and I for one consider the violation of the Pragmatic Sanction an impossibility so far as personal honor and fair dealing is concerned.

(*Bartenstein.*) Humph. My good friend, honor and fair dealing, I regret to say, are only too often elements entirely foreign in the composition of diplomats.

(*Wasner.*) No, no. The covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction is too solemn, and I reiterate that I cannot believe any of the parties thereto will have the audacity to violate any of its conditions.

(*Bartenstein.*) May heaven grant that your hopeful view of the situation will be justified by future events. I am full of apprehension and my reason for alarm can be demonstrated best by a review of the stipulations and agreements of that famous document known as the Pragmatic Sanction. Let us for a moment consider its origin and the magnitude of its importance. When the Emperor Charles the Sixth, the good and gentle father of our beloved Maria Theresa closed his eyes in death, the male issue of the Hapsburgh family became extinguished. It was the constant prayer and the dearest wish of the Emperor that a son should be born unto him, upon whose head and shoulders the Imperial crown and mantle of Austria should descend. The Imperial prayer was in vain. Heaven for some inscrutable reason did not vouchsafe to grant it. At last when the Emperor found that his earthly pilgrimage was about to close, and that his fondest hope could not be realized, he called together and convened about him all of the nobility representing the various crownlands of the House of Hapsburg, and from them obtained the solemn promise and consent that should the male issue of the House of Hapsburgh become extinguished by his death, in that event the Imperial crown should descend upon his beloved daughter Maria Theresa, together with the right to reign as Empress of Austria. The representatives of the crownlands solemnly promised to grant the wish of the Emperor, and accordingly stipulations and agreements were drawn and signed, and

then and there received Pragmatic Sanction. Venice, Sardinia, Rome, England, Poland, Prussia, France, Russia and Saxony, when made acquainted with the Pragmatic Sanction, solemnly guaranteed to uphold, and if necessary to defend it. That is the origin of the celebrated compact and the magnitude of its importance can be appreciated when we consider that it saves to the House of Hapsburgh the Imperial crown of Austria, even though it should rest upon the head of a woman. Will the compact be honored by strict compliance with its conditions by Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony. That is the momentous question which continually haunts me.

(*Wasner.*) Ah!—I see, I see.

(*Bartenstein.*) Yes my dear friend, you may deem it imprudent on my part to speak so freely about matters of State, but remember it is only to you who has known me in my humblest condition that I thus unbosom myself, well knowing that you will not abuse my confidence.

(*Wasner.*) Your communication will be stored in my breast and there remain unrevealed. I too feel that with the reign of our young Empress new life and vigor will be imparted to all affairs of State. As friend of her Majesty I often had occasion to admire her splendid talents. She indeed possesses the wisdom and steadfastness of her ancestor Rudolph the First; the beauty of his nephew Frederick; the gift to charm every heart as possessed by her ancestor Maximilian, and the deep religious convictions of her grand father. But see! yonder is the Empress. She is coming towards the garden apparently in deep meditation.

(*Bartenstein.*) It is her Majesty. Every morning before entering upon the duties of the day, she renews her love of nature by a visit to the castle garden. Usually, just as you now see, she reads some useful book, and when the chapel bell calls to holy Mass, she attends to commune with her Creator, imploring Him to grant her wisdom and charity in deciding matters concerning her Empire. Come now, let us quietly retire, lest we may disturb her Majesty.

(*Exit Bartenstein and Wasner.*)

(Enter Empress Maria Theresa reading a book. For a moment she continues to read, then looks upon the scene and exclaims:)

The first season of the year. How sweet the music!
The gentle zephyrs of Spring as they waft o'er hill and dale,
Brook and River, sea and dry land,
Touch a chord of hope within the human breast.
In strains of gentlest sympathy they breathe upon frozen nature,
Inviting all things to awake and join in the glad hymn of resurrection.
And lo, behold!
Ere long all nature appears in fresh attire,
The birds rehearse their sweetest songs;
All the insect world hums in happy unison.
Even man, the Creators masterpiece, checks his busy gait,
While with a grateful smile he hearkens to nature's invitation to rejoice.
Renewed life, renewed hope the inspiring music of nature's orchestra
Pours into his every vein.

(While the Empress recites the above lines, her husband, Francis Stephan, Duke of Lorraine, enters. He listens attentively, stealthily approaches the Empress and after she ceases speaking, claps his hands and exclaims:) Bravo Maria! Bravo Maria!

(Empress.) Ah! my beloved Francis! *(reclines in his arms)*
Why did you play eavesdropper? Dearest Francis, I am so happy.

(Francis.) Beloved Maria, you seem indeed as happy as a child.

(Empress.) And why should I not be? By virtue of my young years I have youth. By virtue of the Imperial dignity resting upon my shoulders, I have power. From you, beloved husband, as the free choice of my heart, I have affection. Recognizing an allwise Creator, to whom I am accountable for each act done or omitted, I have peace of conscience. Youth, power, affection and peace of conscience! Dearest Francis, what more could I ask? But far above the Imperial crown do I prize one other dignity. I mean the exalted dignity bestowed upon me by virtue of being a mother. Every morning the young voices of my children greet me with the sweetest salute that ever fell on mortal ear: Mother!—and when night comes, their weary little arms are outstretched to clasp me in bonds of truest and

most sincere affection, while from innocent lips again and again falls the affectionate salutation: Mother!

(*Francis.*) How thankful I should be, beloved Maria, that in you, the first lady of the land, the people possesses a conscientious ruler, my children a devoted mother, and I a true and faithful wife.

(*Empress.*) How kind and encouraging to hear such praise from your lips. And yet, ah me! (*sighs.*)

(*Francis.*) You well deserve it. But why look sad and sigh so suddenly?

(*Empress.*) I know not how it is.
Often, in the very midst of happy moments
A strange apprehension of a speedy change steals over me.
Look at the leaves of yonder trees,
Protecting in their infinite multitude and multiformity
Each living creature with cooling shadows.
Soon, soon they will fall, and their rustling will be
As a chant of complaint because of man's ingratitude;
For then they will be trod upon by those whom in their bloom
They shielded from the burning midday sun.
Such thoughts, dear Francis, of coming ingratitude, change and decay
Suddenly overcome me, even in the very midst of bliss and happiness.
And I know not how, a mysterious voice then seems to whisper
That soon, very soon the worm of envy, hatred and ungratefulness
Will begin to gnaw at the pillars of the throne of the house of Hapsburgh,
Which, if not resisted in its inception,
Will cause its speedy declension and fall!

(*Francis.*) Come now, do not permit such gloomy thoughts to trouble you. Should the envious worm appear we will speedily make it harmless by crushing it out of existence. Come now, be cheerful.

(*Empress.*) Yes, yes, I will follow your advice. Forgive me, I could not help it.

(*Enter a servant.*) If it please your Majesty, a number of persons, evidently belonging to the nobility, are desirous to be presented.

(*Empress.*) Anxious to be presented?—Ah, yes, I remember. I think I know the object of their visit. Francis, why not receive them here?

(*Francis.*) Certainly Maria, as you please.

(*Empress to servant.*) Go conduct them here. But first of all, I desire to see Minister Bartenstein. Ah! yonder he comes. (*Exit servant.*)—(*To Francis.*) You must remain also and assist at the reception.

(*Francis.*) With pleasure.

(*Enter Bartenstein. He approaches the Empress who holds forth her hand which the Minister reverently kisses.*)

(*Empress.*) Good morning Minister Baatenstein. I desire your presence during a reception. You remember. Are you well?

(*Bartenstein.*) Thanks, gracious Majesty, always better in your presence. (*Aside*) Ha! ha! now for an icy reception, that old bear will attend to all serious business. Ha! ha!

(*Empress.*) Why my dear Minister, you seem to be highly amused. What is the matter?

(*Bartenstein.*) Pardon me your Highness. I,—I was thinking of the Doctor. (*Aside*) Heaven fargive the untruth.

(*Empress.*) Ah, how sad the dear good Doctor cannot assist at the reception. He is such a dear good soul. Such a profound statesman. Ha! ha! What a delightful lecture he delivered this morning on history and repose. Ah, my! almost overwhelming.

(*Francis.*) It is time to cease jesting about the good Doctor. See, yonder he comes.

(*Empress.*) Yes, and he seems absorbed in deep study. He appears to be reading aloud to himself.

(*Bartenstein.*) Perhaps rehearsing my second dose of his powerful critique.

(*Empress.*) Or perchance it is the second chapter of my historic lecture. At all events let us remain very quiet, so as not to disturb the flow of his profound production.

(*Enter Doctor.*)

(*Doctor.*) I hold here in my hand what I consider the most classic production of my pen. It is a criticism which I fear but few, very few persons will be able fully to appreciate. In truth, it is a most critical criticism, which I have no doubt will amaze future generations because of the depth and profundity of the critical analysis of the Divine art. I have—in all modesty be it said—simply surpassed myself. How I long to read it to the Empress with voice and gesture about like this. (*Doctor proceeds to read:*) Impressions of the Opera. The entire performance was a success. It was a gala night. All the stars of the local musical firmament appeared, and when they sang together, it was like the harmony of the spheres on the morning of Creation. Mlle. Vocalitini shone with especial splendour. Her singing at the close of the third act was superb. How exquisitely *legato* were her *staccato* passages. Her *fortissimos* were like the swell of the great organ, while her *pianissimos* were like the sweet murmurings of the *fagotto*. Her *trillandos* beginning so tenderly *andante*, increasing *a la allegro et poco a poco crescendo*, and diminishing *a la adagioso et poco a poco pianissimo*, and finally ending in the faintest and most delicate *florituri*. Ah, my! what a gifted singer she is. The closing bars of her solo gave her an opportunity to display the *imposo* of her execution. Spell bound and enraptured the great audience followed her vocalization. On, on and still onward; up, up and still upward the great cantatrice boldly and fearlessly *a la majestoso et furioso*, as though driven by a whirlwind of passion ploughed her vocal way until finally *a la prestissimo* the grand climax was reached by intoning with a clear, pure and strong abdominal chest tone the high C. That is what I term,—in all modesty be it said,—a purely classic critique and which can only be appreciated by purely classic ears. (*While the Doctor reads his critique the Empress and all present look at each other in amazement, scarcely able to control their laughter, and the Doctor having finished, they all cry out:*) Bravo Doctor! Bravo Doctor!

(*Empress.*) That my dear Doctor is doubtless your latest.

(*Bartenstein.*) Heaven grant that it may also be his last.

(*Doctor.*) Ah, thank you. (*Aside*) Quite a doubtful compliment. Pardon me, most gracious Majesty. I was not aware of your august presence. However, I trust that the pleasure experienced in hearing my latest will by far outweigh the annoyance caused by my unintentional intrusion. Once again before going, I ask your Majesty's pardon.

(*Empress.*) No no, good Doctor, do not go. You have our full pardon. But pray, let your future efforts be not quite so, not quite so, —so a, —so a, —I mean—

(*Bartenstein*) Not quite so tremendously laborious.

(*Empress.*) Yes yes, I believe that's it.

(*Doctor.*) Ah, thank you. (*Aside*) Quite a doubtful compliment.

(*Enter servant.*) If it please your Majesty, the nobility awaits your pleasure.

(*Empress.*) Admit them. I will endeavor to listen patiently. (*Servant beckons the nobility to advance. The Empress sits down into a large chair, while the Doctor, Francis and Bartenstein remain standing.*)

(*Empress.*) Pray my noble ladies and gentlemen, what is your desire?

(*First nobleman advances and reads an address.*) To her Majesty, Empress of Austria, we, her servants, hereby beg leave to present our congratulations upon her accession to the throne; well knowing that her force of mind and strength of character will bestow much benefit upon our country. And as in the past we have served her Majesty's august and lamented father, so in the future we all cheerfully and voluntarily offer to continue in the service of the illustrious daughter of Charles the Sixth, and hereby say: Long live Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria.

(*Empress rises.*) Thank you my noble ladies and gentlemen. My sincere thanks. Your address was very nice. Very neat indeed. But pray, if I may inquire, of what consisted your services during my father's reign? Pardon me if I am ignorant of your valorous and patriotic deeds. If not mistaken, I recognize in you a goodly part of a certain swarm of flatterers which surrounded the throne of my beloved, but too kind and gentle father. I well remember how regularly you attended the Imperial Opera, how gracefully you danced at the royal balls, and served as elegant ornaments at all the festivities of the Court. Pleasure, pleasure, nothing but pleasure seemed, and yet seems to be the beginning and end, the height and depth of your ambition.

Therefore, as guardian of the interests of the people, I have resolved to decline your future valuable services, and now command your speedy resignation. Though outwardly you carry the Austrian uniform, inwardly your hearts beat without affection for the House of Hapsburgh. Go! henceforth the affairs of State need a watchful eye, and mine shall be cast upon them. (*Exit nobility in great confusion.*)

(*Bartenstein aside.*) Ha! ha! that old bear will attend to all serious business.

(*Francis aside.*) By my patron Saint Francis, the beginning of Maria's reign is very significant.

(*Doctor aside.*) Very doubtful those compliments; very doubtful indeed.

(*Empress.*) I thank you gentlemen for your kind attendance, and now that the time appointed for my morning devotion has come you will pardon my desire to be alone.

(*Francis.*) We will retire at once with your permission.

(*Empress.*) Good morning gentlemen.

(*Exit Francis, Doctor and Bartenstein.*)

(The chapel bell announces the hour of prayer. The Empress assumes an attitude of devotion. The chapel choir sings a hymn, accompanied by the organ. While the chapel choir sings, the Empress slowly approaches the chapel entrance. Just as the Empress is about to enter the chapel, Count Boskay, a Hungarian nobleman enters the garden not aware of the presence of the Empress.)

(Boskay.) Maria's foes are without number.

(Empress starts and listens eagerly.)

And no true man will by treachery her cause and right betray.

So spake her friends and I must confess

That their words of warning follow me wherever I go.

Even now my conscience is troubled more than usual.

(The Empress 't is said, teems and is radiant with beauty,

Whereby she exercises great influence.

I too admire a lovely and virtuous woman,

But at present my country's rights are far more important

Than angelic forms and captivating features.

Hungaria! dear Hungaria!

There was a time when thou couldst claim

That dearest of all blessings,—Independence,

While now of thy former self but a mere shadow remains.

How long! how long wilt you endure the yoke of misgovernment?

(Enter a servant.)

Pardon me my lord, are you Count Stanislaus Boskay?

(Boskay.) I am. What is your desire?

(Servant.) I was requested by a person unknown to me to deliver this letter. *(Exit servant.)*

(Boskay reads.) Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony are now ready to break the covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction. Now a glorious opportunity is presented to Hungaria to shake off Austria's rule by joining in the revolt against Maria Theresa. Come to Berlin at once. A friend of Hungaria.

(Boskay.) Never will Hungaria act the part of traitor against Austria's young Empress. Hungaria scorns liberty procured by treachery. However, I will go to Berlin and there await further developments. *(Exit Boskay.)*

(Empress.) Maria Theresa's foes are without number?—Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony are now ready to break the cov-

enant of the Pragmatic Sanction? Now a glorious opportunity is presented to Hungaria to shake off Austria's rule by joining in the revolt against Maria Theresa? Can it be?—Can it be?—Has the worm of envy, hatred and jealousy now festering in the breast of Frederick already spread its foul contagion over all crowned Europe; that even now 't is prepared to gnaw and gnaw at the mighty pillars of the House of Hapsburgh until Austria's throne shall topple and bury beneath its ruins a helpless woman? Helpless! I am not helpless. My own brain shall solve the problem to destroy and crush the net of intrigue prepared and spread by Prussia's wily and unscrupulous king; and thus by my own intrinsic power will I become the saviour of my beloved Austria. Hungaria scorns liberty procured by treachery. So spake the noble stranger. His brave words indicate and point out to me what first of all I must do. I must make a friend of the noble stranger and through him win the affection of Hungaria's nobility. May heaven grant a speedy opportunity.

(At this moment the chapel bell again rings. The chapel choir softly sings. The Empress walks slowly towards the chapel entrance where she pauses and says:)

For Austria's welfare I now will pray,
At Jehovah's feet my petition lay,
To thee Austria's Empress gives implicit trust
And only then will enter war if she must.

(Empress enters the chapel.)

(Enter two Austrian soldiers.)

(Soldier.) This being devotions hour of her Majesty, we must not permit visitors to enter the chapel. Now to our post. *(Soldiers patrol before the chapel.)*

(Enter Count Boskay in a state of bewilderment.) Strange, very strange. I have lost my way. I cannot for the world find my way out of this park. The whole place seems to be deserted. Ah! yonder is a chapel. Perhaps I will find some one there to inform me how to get out of this garden. *(He approaches the chapel.)*

(Soldier.) Halt! you Hungarian dog.

(Boskay.) Villain! your impudence shall not go unpunished.

(Draws his sword.)

(*Soldier.*) At him, comrade; measure well your blows.

(*The soldiers attack Boskay who defends himself vigorously, but is finally overpowered and thrown upon the ground. At this moment a strain of music coming from the chapel, is heard. The soldiers look up alarmed. The Empress appears and rushing upon the combatants, exclaims:*) What means such unfair attack.

(*Exit soldiers in great haste.*)

(*Boskay.*) 'T is my guardian angel! So help me my patron, Saint Stanislaus.

(*Empress.*) Why so long upon your knees? Arise, I pray you.

(*She kneels.*) Before a subject of mortality
Count Boskay ne'er has bend a knee;
But before thine angelic form,
Adorned so richly by the Master's hand
No man can stand.
Had thy majestic presence not appeared so timely,
I now would be a member of the dead.

(*Empress.*) Nay, Count Boskay. Not to me give all your praise,
His instrument I but was who guides all our ways.
But pray, what commission brought thee from Hungaria?

(*Boskay.*) One upon ^{which} great consequences depend.

(*Empress.*) And to whom is it directed?

(*Boskay.*) To her, who by her great beauty controls the ministry.

(*Empress.*) Ah! pray, who may that beauty be?

(*Boskay.*) 'T is Maria Theresa, Austria's young Empress.

(*Empress.*) Ah, indeed. But my lord, the Empress is pleased to grant assistance to all her people. You have betrayed the nature of your commission. I think it is a plea for the restoration of Hungaria's former rights.

(*Boskay.*) Your conclusion is very true.

(*Empress.*) Thanks Count Boskay, though I think your tongue shares the weakness of womans. However, one feels pleased to share the confidence of a stranger in matters of such great moment.

(*Boskay.*) O'n, fairest lady ! If concerning my commission
I too much gossiped in this wondrous meeting,
'T was because something told me
That thy intercession for my dear Hungaria
Will be of great benefit.
In gazing upon thee one is persuaded to believe
That in thy veins the blood of royalty flows.

(*Empress*) All mankind can to royalty aspire,
Even the lowliest born.
Control but thy hearts desire,
And royalty will thee adorn.
I not allude to royalty of chance
Conveyed by so-called divine inheritance.
Too oft' does it degrade
The grandeur of its significance.
Would you find a royal heart ?
Go not to royal Courts
Forms only does it there embrace,
While deeds the foulest their hearts debase.
Would you find a royal heart ?
Go where conscience does reign,
It alone can royalty impart
To King and Peasant all the same.

(*Boskay.*) By Saint Stanislaus ! reveal thyself ! Who art thou ?
What majesty in thy bearing,
What sweetness in thy voice and leaping in thine eye.
As yet I know not who thou art, but this I know,
If all thy sex would listen to thy counsel
Young men would love more purely,
And home be made more happy.
Again I implore thee, reveal thyself,
Who art thou ?

(*Empress.*) I'm am thy sovereign, Maria Theresa, Empress
of Austria.

(*Boskay.*) My sovereign, Empress of Austria !
Henceforth my life shall be at thy command.

(*Empress.*) Thanks ! thanks oh thou great Jehovah,
I have found a friend for my beloved Austria.
May this truth to all mankind be taught,
That none in vain thy intercession sought.

(*End of Act first.*)

ACT II.—SCENE I.

(*Night. The studio and bed chamber of the Empress. The bed chamber is separated from the studio by two large curtains. Candles are dimly burning in the studio. The Empress is sitting at her study table in deep meditation.*)

(*Empress*) No, no ! I cannot give serious attention to prevailing rumors, That Prussia has already violated the covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction. Neither can my soul believe that Frederick contemplates The annexation of Silesia to the Prussian domain. No, no ! so base no royal heart could be. 'T is true, ever since I assumed the reigns of government, A strange voice continuously seems to whisper That mighty things are being planned in other crowned heads Against the throne of Austria. At times I can scarcely keep my tongue from uttering my fear, While in other moments a gentle calmness of mind Lulls me into a sense of such strong security, As to almost persuade me that all my anxiety concerning Austria Is without foundation. Would to heaven it were so.

(*Enter Agnes, maid of honor.*)

(*Empress.*) Ah, Agnes. Is it time to retire? How fast the hours fly.

(*Agnes.*) It is time, your Majesty.

(*Empress.*) Come then, wrap me in my furs. I feel so cold. Hear how the wind breaks the silence of the night. (*The wind is heard blowing.*) 'T is well so. Good night Agnes.

(*Agnes.*) Good night most gracious Majesty.

(*Exit Agnes.*)

(*Empress.*) Agnes ! Agnes ! (*Enter Agnes.*)

(*Agnes.*) Has your Majesty called me ?

(*Empress.*) Yes. Pray do not forget to watch carefully over my dear little ones.

(*Agnes.*) They all have gone to sleep, their last words being a prayer for your Majesty.

(*Empress.*) What a cheering benediction from the lips of youth and innocence to accompany our sleep. Thank you, dear Agnes, good night. (*Exit Agnes.*)

(*The curtains of the bed room now slowly open. The Empress enters her bed room and kneels for a few moments in silent prayer during which the organ softly plays. The curtains close, leaving only the studio visible. Enter Agnes on tip-toe.*)

(*Agnes.*) Never before have I seen the Empress act so strangely. Well, its no wonder. Her Majesty has reason to be alarmed because, from certain remarks which I overheard, in spite of all my efforts not to hear, I judge that her royal Highness will soon have trouble with his royal Highness, the king of Prussia. The truth is that Prussia wants no less than Silesia. Gracious! here I stand, talking to myself. And yonder comes Dr. Haversack, paying his regular visit to her Majesty to feel her pulse before retiring. Too late this evening. The Empress has already retired. I have an idea. I'll play a joke on the good old man. Shall I? Yes I will. Heaven forgive me but I'll do it innocently. No bad intention whatever. I'll play Empress. The Doctor is so nearsighted that by changing my voice a little he will, —in all modesty be it said,— take me for the Empress. I will sit as stately, act as sedately, and bow as graciously as possible, and then reach forth my hand to have it kissed, and my pulse felt. Gracions, what a mean thing I am. But really, I can't help it. The opportunity for a little fun at the good Doctors expense is so good. Here he comes.

(*Enter Doctor. His pockets filled with documents. He reverently approaches Agnes, bows profoundly and says:*) I trust your Majesty is very well to-night. (*Agnes bows her head in a very stately manner and reaches forth her hand which the Doctor gently passes to his lips and then proceeds to feel her pulse.*)

(*Doctor.*) A truly royal pulse. Splendid condition. I congratulate your Majesty. This morning the rapidity of your pulse

alarmed me; now, however, everything is in first class condition. A regular normal pulse.

(*Agnes.*) Everything may be very normal, but, really dear Doctor, I have a peculiar pain right here. (*Places her hand on her heart.*)

(*Doctor.*) Impossible! I will examine at once. Pardon me your Majesty. (*The Doctor gently raises Agnes' arm over his head, and places his ear on her breast to examine her heart.*)

(*Doctor.*) Not the slightest flutter or irregularity. Perfectly normal. My services this evening were entirely useless and superfluous.

(*Agnes.*) Entirely useless and superfluous as usual I presume.

(*Doctor.*) Entirely useless and superfluous as usual?—Ah, thanks your Majesty. (*Aside.*) Quite a doubtful compliment.

(*Agnes.*) Ha! ha! Very doubtful indeed. So mine is a truly royal pulse. Pardon me dear good Doctor. Really I could not help it. The opportunity for a little nonsense was so very good. Now, please don't look angry. I'll never do it again. Please forgive me.

(*Doctor*) Agnes, Agnes. It is not fair to take advantage of the infirmity of my eyesight. However, I know you did not mean to hurt my feelings, only a little nonsense, and therefore I'll forgive you, provided you promise me that you will not say a word about it to anyone because, you see my dear, it will never do for the Empress to find out that I could not tell the difference between a royal and an ordinary pulse. And now, you beautiful rogue, I will read you a composition on the manipulation of the voice composed by me. (*Gets out his manuscript.*) You see my dear,—pardon me for calling you dear,—but really I am so very fond of the young and beautiful, (*tips her under the chin,*) as I said before you see a,——

(*Agnes.*) Oh, certainly my dear Doctor. I see it all. Your fondness for the young and beautiful is just like that of a grandfather for his grandchildren. Real grandfatherly. (*Tips him under the chin.*)

(*Doctor.*) Real grandfatherly?—Ah, yes! I see. Old enough to be a grandfather. (*Aside.*) Quite a doubtful compliment. Well, as I said before, or rather as I wanted to say, you perhaps are not aware that Doctor of Medicine is not my only accomplishment. I have branched out in several directions. For instance,—in all modesty be it said,—Music, History and the Fine Arts in general have received my valuable attention. My latest essay is on the manipulation of the voice. You will permit me to read. (*Doctor unrolls a large manuscript.*)

(*Agnes.*) Certainly dear Doctor. But before commencing to read you will be kind enough to excuse me for a few moments. I'll return presently.

(*Doctor.*) Certainly my dear, I'll excuse you, but only for a little while. In the mean time I'll arrange my manuscript.

(*Agnes.*) Yes, arrange it very nicely. Now be sure of my return.

(*Doctor.*) Why certainly.

(*Agnes.*) (*Aside.*) Why certainly not.—Good bye, Doctor. Be sure while reading to manipulate your voice real nicely so as to bring out every necessary modulation and emphasis. Good bye, (*Exit Agnes.*)

(*Doctor.*) Good bye you lovely creature. Now don't be long. (*Doctor arranges his manuscript in every possible way, awaiting the return of Agnes; finally a suspicion dawns upon him that she will not return and he says:*) I am afraid my audience will be very small to-night. Agnes told me to manipulate my voice real nicely so as to bring out all proper effects. Certainly Miss Agnes, manipulate real nicely, all to myself. Thank you Miss Agnes. Quite a doubtful compliment. (*Exit Doctor.*)

(The curtains of the Empress' bed room slowly open. The Empress is seen lying upon her couch. She dreams of Peace. All the emblems of peace pass before her vision. In her dream she sees a village surrounded by green fields over which the setting sun throws his golden rays. A ploughman is seen tilling his field. A shepherd is seen, surrounded by his flock. Angels are seen strewing flowers. Soft strains of music pervade the air. The countenance of the Empress expresses rapturous delight. — Enter an apparition.)

(Apparition speaks:)

Sleep, young sovereign sleep.

And may peace forever reign within the borders of your land.

(Exit Apparition.)

(Empress speaks in her sleep:)

Peace, sweet peace! how came it to pass

That thou dwellest so truly realized upon this Earth?

Heaven kisses Earth, while Earth kisses Heaven,

And peace, sweet peace makes all the Universe harmonious.

Here, here! let me forever dwell.

My kingdom for this dear abode.

(The vision of peace now vanishes. The Empress awakes and sits up in her couch, and no longer seeing the vision of Peace, exclaims:)

All, all is vanished.

Peace on this Earth?—No, no, 't was but a dream.

I will again endeavor to sleep.

And should my dream of Peace again return,

'Then I wish this night would be eternal.

(The Empress again lies down to sleep. She dreams of war. All the emblems of War pass before her vision. In her dream she sees the same village entirely demolished and in ruins. The shepherd is seen flying in terror, his flock all scattered. The ploughman lies dead beside his broken plough. A hideous figure brandishes a fire brand. The elements are in uproar. The Empress tosses about, her countenance expressing intense agony. She again speaks in her sleep:)

Peaceful village, how came this horrid war,
Murder and famine over thee?

(Enter an apparition. It advances towards the Empress and speaks:)

Ah, Maria Theresa!
Learn that the village which in thy dreams thou hast seen
Thine Empire represents.
Sweet Peace, the first dream bestowed.
The second, grim and horrid war.
Of war provoking monarchs.
Beware! beware! beware!
Beware of Prussias Frederick;
Also shun king Louis of France.
Frederick will play thee many foul trick,
While Louis is jealous of thy Imperial crown.
Beware of Bavaria's Albert
He too displays a lust
The Austrian House of Hapsburgh
To trample into dust.

(Exit apparition.)

(The Empress suddenly awakes. She starts from her couch and falling upon her knees, exclaims:)

Have mercy, oh God! have mercy upon my land.

(The Empress being now thoroughly aroused, rises, looks about her and continues:)

Why stand I here in such unseasonable hour of the night?

Why sleep not and rest from the fatigue of day?

Ah! I remember.

Two singular dreams, one in contrast with the other
Have wrought within my mind such strange agitation.

I would I could persuade myself

That dreams are but dreams, void of significance,

Mere accompaniments of sleep and empty phantoms of an excited brain.

Alas, no. Some dreams I believe often foreshadow the deeds

That lie concealed in the deep bosom of the future.

Two dreams.—The first of peace. Oh! that it would be verified.

The second of war and all its dreadful consequences.

Oh, God! inflict not upon my land such awful visitation.

Peace and plenty the first would give my Austria;
The second nothing but famine and deep affliction.
This night's impression fill my heart even unto despair.
Why oh God! was I not born a Peasant
Instead of a crown's heir?

(*Enter Agnes.*)

(*Empress.*) Who is there?

(*Agnes.*) It is I. But why does your Majesty appear so alarmed?

(*Empress.*) Oh, Agnes! is it you? How strange this night has been.
In truth I am as much alarmed as I appear.
Abide with me, I dread to be longer alone.
Though my conscience is as light as innocence.
Is it yet long until the morning?

(*Agnes.*) The day has already dawned and I have come to attend your Majesty's desire.

(*Empress.*) First of all I desire to see Minister Bartenstein.

(*Agnes.*) Even now the Minister is walking in the garden appearing like one whose peace of mind had been disturbed by receiving alarming news.

(*Empress.*) Alarming news?—Go, go, bid him to appear at once.

(*Exit Agnes.*)

Alarming news?—Perchance from Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony?
My dreams.—Oh, my dreams. (*Enter Bartenstein.*)
Ah, friend Bartenstein!

Friend said I?—Are you a friend?
Did I apply that noblest of titles to a worthy person,
Or does black deceit also lurk within your bosom?

(*Bartenstein.*) Most gracious Majesty, I am amazed at such suspicion.

(*Empress.*) Forgive Bartenstein, my strange conduct.
My mind is troubled from dreams most ominous,
And though I have rebelled against mistrust,
Yet suspicion will arise within me
And cause my tongue to utter unkind words
Even against my best and truest friends.
Pray tell me what is the news from Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony?

(*Bartenstein*) Your Majesty's question is most opportune.
For even this morning have I heard of those
Concerning whom your Highness has inquired.

(*Empress*) What have you learned and from whom?

(*Bartenstein*.) Hear me your Majesty.
This morning, just as I approached the garden entrance,
A stranger, by appearance a Hungarian nobleman
And with a countenance indicating a truthful character,
Spoke thus to me :
Sir, pardon me, I believe you are Minister Bartenstein,
And if you truly love your country
Delay not a moment to inform your Empress
That Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony
Have formed a conspiracy to crush the throne of Austria.

(*Empress*) Who is the stranger?
Such accusation requires more than mere words
And an honest face. Let him appear at once
That we might examine the source of his alarming information.

(*Loud knocking is heard.*)

(*Empress.*) Who is there?

(*Enter Count Boskay much excited. He kneels before the Empress.*)

Pardon me most gracious Majesty, for thus appearing unannounced.
Gratitude to thee and anxiety for Austria's welfare only
Can excuse my boldness.
Believe me your Majesty, against the House of Hapsburgh
Thy enemies have weaved a conspiracy so fine,
That a spider would in vain endeavor
To finer weave its nest.
To destroy and cripple Austria's power a web is being spun at present,
Of which Prussia is the spinning master,
While Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony
The material will furnish for the webs speedy completion.
Here is evidence of the conspiracy's magnitude.

(*Boskay gives the Empress documents which she silently reads
with apparent indignation.*)

(*Empress.*) As I live ! this is indeed a royal brotherhood of treachery.

(*Bartenstein to Boskay.*) My lord, should that document prove a forgery,
Then by the sword of St. Stephen, you will be dishonored.

(*Boskay.*) Sir! such foul imputation against a Boskay is unpardonable.
To let it pass unresented would prove me unworthy
Of my glorious ancestors.
Sir! by Hungaria's honor, I am no forger.
Here is my gauntlet, take it up or heal my wounded honor
By a speedy retraction.

(*Empress.*) Sir! take up thy gauntlet.
That honor which fancies itself wounded
By every unguarded expression in excitement's moment,
And without first resorting to reason seeks at once a bloody vindication,
Is poor indeed.

(*Boskay*) Does your Majesty also distrust me?
Speak, in what have I offended.
Be assured, until my report is affirmed by a more trustworthy person,
Boskay will remain thy prisoner.

(*Enter a Servant.*)

(*Servant.*) If it please your Majesty, Count Wasner begs leave
to see you at once.

(*Empress.*) Count Wasner here in Vienna? Why has he re-
turned from Paris without our permission? Quick let him appear.
(*Exit Servant.*) My Lord Boskay, Count Wasner's sudden return
from the Court of France confirms my suspicion that your report is
not without foundation. Bartenstein, there is truth in it.

(*Bartenstein*) I cannot believe it.

(*Enter Count Wasner much excited. He reverently approaches
the Empress and says:*)

God preserve your Highness.
Mighty things are being planned against the House of Hapsburgh.
In deep secrecy plans are being made
Concerning which I have positively learned
That Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony
Have solemnly combined to break the covenant
Of the Pragmatic Sanction.
And therefore I have left the Court of France
To inform your Majesty of this treacherous combination.

(*Empress*) Can it be? Can it be?
Bartenstein read aloud this document of treachery.
Read it slow and with such emphasis as to leave no doubt
Concerning its base significance.

(*Bartenstein reads. All listen eagerly.*)

His Highness, King Louis of France, hereby promises Bavaria the German Imperial throne. Should the French promise provoke the hostility of other European powers, in that event France will also furnish for Bavaria's defence sixty thousand soldiers. In consideration of the benefits received, Charles Albert of Bavaria promises to resign now and forever all claims on Luxemburgh and all the Austrian Netherlands. Furthermore, Prussia, France, Bavaria and Saxony hereby agree to enter solemn protest against the covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction, and if peaceful means will not induce Maria Theresa to part with such dominion as we may designate, then war will be inevitable.

[SIGNED.]

LOUIS, king of France.

FREDERICK, king of Prussia.

AUGUSTUS, king of Saxony.

CHARLES ALBERT, duke of Bavaria.

(*All but the Empress cry out:*) Shameful! thrice shameful such conspiracy.

(*Empress takes the document and with sarcasm says:*) And if peaceful means will not induce Maria Theresa to part with such dominion as we,—as we, bear in mind gentlemen, as we may designate, then war will be inevitable. Ah ha! at first measures of peace, and then,—bless their royal hearts,—inevitable war, provided,—how provokingly kind,—their royal appetites for Austrian dominion is not speedily satisfied, Luxemburgh and all, all, why of course all the Austrian Netherlands. How very modest these royal gentlemen. We are just a little anxious to learn how much this model combination of royalty will deign to accept. They have kindly consented to designate such portions of our dominion as would confer most benefit to their States. How touchingly kind to spare us the embarrassment of making the selection.

Oh, you robber monarchs!
All is to me now clearly defined.
Because I am a mere woman
They would dim the splendour of the House of Hapsburgh.
If so, let come what may,
Austria's Empress will prove to be an Emperor!

(*All present cry out:*) God preserve our Empress.

(*Empress.*) Sir Bartenstein, we must act at once. Go, inform
General Braun to report for active duty.

(*Bartenstein.*) May Heaven be with you. (*Exit Bartenstein.*)

(*Empress.*) Sir Wasner, do not return to France until further
orders.

(*Wasner.*) May God be our guide. (*Exit Wasner.*)

(*Empress.*) Of your friendship, my noble Boskay, I feel assured.
Go now and induce every Hungarian to follow your example.

(*Boskay.*) To that end I pledge my sacred honor. (*Exit Bosk.*)

Ah, Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony!
Come forth in your deceit and treachery,
A daughter of the House of Hapsburgh
Will baffle your shameful plans by determined opposition.
And though you add uncounted numbers to your band
She'll fling defiance in your every face,
And with her last drop of blood guard her just inheritance.
Austria, dear Austria! I love thee.
Not a single province shall they pluck from my bosom.
Farewell sleep! sweet, sweet rest adieu!
Fear not. my Austria, thy Empress wakes for you

(*End of Act Second.*)

ACT III.—SCENE I.

(Grand Court building containing the throne room, etc. A park in front of the building. The Court building is closed. Enter the park Agnes.)

(Agnes.) Gracious heaven! such excitement and upheaval as prevails at present about the Court. Such hustle and bustle. Everything topsy turvy. And the good and loveable Empress. One moment in tears, the next full of defiance and courage. Always in consultation. Now sending for Minister Bartenstein, now for her dear husband, now for General Braum, now for Duke so and so, now for Count so and so, for me all the time, and for Doctor Haversack ha! ha! —for Doctor Haversack of voice manipulation fame never, because really, the old man comes without being called, and is generally to be found most where he is wanted least.

(During the above dialogue the Doctor enters. He stealthily approaches Agnes, listens attentively and when she finishes speaks directly into her ear:) Thank you Miss Agnes. *(Aside.)* Quite a doubtful compliment.

(Agnes.) Heavens! oh Doctor! how you have frightened me. Oh, my! Well, what now? I'm in a great hurry.

(Doctor.) Nothing less my lovely friend than a little dissertation on the manipulation of the voice. A kind of diagnosis of vocalization. *(Produces his manuscript.)* Since last we met I have arranged my manuscript real nicely and have practiced every possible modulation of the voice. *Forte, fortissimo, piano, pianissimo, tremulando agitato et cetera infinitum.*

(Agnes aside.) Et cetera infinitum. That means no end and so forth to his vaporation. What shall I do? The Empress expects me every moment. I must try and vex him.

(*Doctor.*) Come now you charming rogue, sit right here. Now before commencing I will explain the object I have in view in writing this essay. The reason of it—

(*Agnes.*) So you really have an object in view, and reason in, in a, in your—what do you call it?

(*Doctor.*) Vocal diagnosis Agnes, vocal diagnosis is its name.

(*Agnes.*) All name I presume.

(*Doctor.*) All name?—You are quite complimentary.

(*Agnes aside.*) Oh, what a persevering bore! (*To Doctor.*) Commence reading at once. I presume the essay or diagnosis explains itself.

(*Doctor.*) Certainly Miss Agnes, all my efforts are self explanatory. Only one word and I'll commence. You see Miss Agnes,—this is strictly confidential,—I have read quite a number of so called treatises on voice manipulation, but, really, the authors impressed me as being but very superficially acquainted with the subject, and when I compared my work with theirs, I can assure you Miss Agnes,—in all modesty be it said,—I felt a thrill, an all pervading thrill of satisfaction to know that my rival authors are mere blockheads, and they know it.

(*Agnes.*) Is it possible? But Doctor, is it not far better to be a blockhead and know it, than to be a blockhead and not know it.

(*Doctor.*) Oh, certainly Miss Agnes. (*Aside*) Quite a doubtful compliment.

(*Agnes aside.*) He will not be vexed. I shall try another remedy. (*Agnes moves up close to the Doctor and gently puts one arm around his neck, and with the other manages to take the manuscript.*)

(*Agnes.*) Doctor do you know that you are daily growing more handsome, more winning in manner.

(*Doctor aside.*) Ah ha, at last a genuine compliment.

(*Agnes.*) That is, I mean to say you are growing younger, more childlike, innocent and simple in your ways. Really, at times you are an object most beautiful to behold. Oh, how beautiful! how handsome this little mouth, this classic nose, these ears, and what majesty in this alabaster brow!

(*Doctor.*) Oh, Agnes! your every word is like a drop from the fountain of youth which I eagerly drink. Drop, drop on sweet fountain. To be thus rejuvenated! oh, I am as it were in a trance.— Drop, drop on sweet fountain.

(*Agnes aside.*) He is as it were in a trance. The dear little thing, I must awake him. Drop, drop down sweet Doctor. (*Agnes suddenly gets up which causes the bench upon which she and the Doctor were sitting to upset, thereby causing the Doctor to fall heavily upon the ground. Exit Agnes with manuscript.*)

(*Doctor.*) My trance was of very short duration. Evidently the shortest on record. In *historica medica* no case of trance can be found where similar means were employed with such decided success to revive the subject. I fully realize that the manner of my bringing to was very novel and thoroughly effective. I admit its effect, but in the name of old Esculapius I most emphatically object to the manner of its application. I do not permit to be experimented with. However, I must forget and forgive these youthful indiscretions on the part of Agnes. When she grows old she will become more respectful. But when Agnes grows old, how old will I be? I will not discuss that subject. It's too old. There is another matter which causes me great anxiety. I mean the affairs of State. My sentiments and opinions concerning matters of State are of late entirely ignored. It sometimes seems to me that the Empress has lost all confidence in my statesmanship. It does look that way indeed. However, perhaps I am too modest. Perchance, if I was to make a great effort in overcoming my natural modesty and volunteer my advice upon matters of State, the Empress would feel profoundly grateful. I know what is going on. I do indeed. And forthwith, at once, this very moment I will go to the Empress and assert my patriotism, and use

every effort to change the current of misfortune now rolling against Austria. I ought never to have wasted my time on the study of medicine, because I feel, I feel it in every fibre of my body that I am a born Statesman, and long after my body will be mouldering in the grave, history will speak of me, Augustinus Haversack as Austria's chief benefactor. I feel, I feel the Statesmanship within. (*Exit Doctor.*)

(*Enter stealthily two Prussian officers with large hats, large cloaks and swords on their person.*)

(*William.*) As I live, that is the longest winded cur of an Austrian Statesman I ever heard. A regular wind bag.

(*Frederick.*) Never mind the fellow. The document is the thing. What about it? Where is it? What have you learned concerning it? You know that our life depends upon its recovery; For through our negligence it came into possession Of that barbarous Hungarian Count Boskay, who played his part so well As to make one believe that he were a friend of our cause.

(*William.*) I have learned this last evening in spying about the castle, That the Empress is in full possession of the document, And now constantly carries it as though it were a precious treasure, Within her bosom. Furthermore I have learned that every morning Just before entering upon the duties of the day, the Empress passes through this park, To visit the castle garden, and having finished her physical exercise, Retires to a chapel for spiritual consolation, As she is said to be of a very pious disposition.

(*Frederick.*) Truly, you have performed your work most faithfully. But how obtain possession of the document?

(*William*) As self preservation is the first law of nature, And as our lives depend upon its recovery; And having been obtained from us under false pretenses, Every means will be justified to regain its possession; Even force if necessary.

(*Frederick.*) A very risky business, an assault upon royalty.

(*William.*) We have no other alternative.
 But see ! yonder approaches a woman of majestic presence.
 See ! her eyes are fixed upon something in her hands.
 As I live ! she is reading a document.
 Now she stands motionless, appearing like one in deep thought.
 See ! how her eyes flash with indignation.
 By heavens ! she has the grandest countenance that ever fell to woman's lot.
 Come, we must conceal ourselves and only then venture forth
 When every obstacle in the way of success is removed.
 Extreme prudence is necessary. She is coming towards the park.
 Come, come, let us away and await the opportunity
 To accomplish our design.

(*Exit Frederick and William. They conceal themselves. Enter Empress in deep thought. In her hand she has the document.*)

(*Empress*) What though the blood of innocence will flow in torrents,
 Every bond of affection be rudely torn assunder,
 Husband from wife, father from children, and children from parents.—
 Why all that will prove but beneficial to my just and holy cause.
 Why I am a monarch, a divinely appointed king ;
 And at will a king may chaos unto nations bring.
 'T is true my conscience,—did I say conscience ?
 Ah, bah, conscience !—a mere empty phrase without significance,
 To be applied to superstitious stock
 For the increase of the clergy's flock.
 Ha ! ha ! conscience.—treachery,—honor.—foolish words.
 For timid babes to stay ambitions sword.
 The body dead,—the soul also dead,—all, all is o'er,
 When hearts beat time no more.
 I'll stifle the voice of conscience let come what may.—
 To be written and talked about gained the day.
 Be shrewd Frederick, prove no fool,
 Let not poor conscience thy interests rule.
 Only to yourself truthful be,
 To all others full of subtlety.
 Say yes, but mean no.—Say no but mean yes.
 Thus argued Prussia's unscrupulous king and false philosopher
 When first he concocted the base treachery contained in this document.
 But enough of this. Though my soul is filled with indignation,
 Yet must I appear quiet and composed before the Lord Ambassador,
 Who this day is pleased to present to the House of Hapsburgh,
 Hypocritic offers of good will and peace from Prussia's sovereign.
 To day offers of good will. To morrow ?—Well, we are prepared.

(The Empress conceals the document. Enter suddenly Frederick and William.)

(Frederick.) Stay ! not another step.

(Empress.) Villains ! how dare you thus to address me ?
On your knees implore our Imperial pardon.
Behold !

(The Empress throws back her garment and displays her imperial insignia.)

(Fred to Will) The majesty of that woman fills me with awe.

(Will to Fred.) And out of me she has driven every spark of courage.
What shall we do ?

(Fred) I will address her.

The document now concealed in the bosom of your Majesty,
Was placed in our charge by royal hands.
And while carrying it to the ministry one Count Boskay,
Through artful pretense gained our confidence ;
Inviting us to dine, wine and make merry with him.
And having freely partaken our tongues became unguarded
And babbled concerning our important mission.
When forthwith Boskay filled and refilled our bumpers
Thus making our complete intoxication inevitable.
And while in that condition this same accursed Boskay
Took from us the document and placed it at your Majesty's disposal.
The document we must recover lest our lives be forfeited.
And therefore your Majesty, surrender it freely, without compulsion.

(Empress.) The document is the best evidence of your kings guilt,
And in our hands 't will prove the instrument of his disgrace.
And yet, you demand its surrender, freely without compulsion,
Lest, perchance, you would compel us by cowardly force.
Villains ! why so tremble ?

(William.) We must secure the document let come what may.

(They advance towards the Empress.)

(Empress) Stay ! your unhallowed hands dare not touch this our
annointed body ;
But should you dare, 't is not manly courage but sheer desperation which
prompts you.
Provoking only our supreme contempt.

(Fred. and Will. again advance towards the Empress. At this moment Boskay with drawn sword rushes upon the scene and exclaims:)

By St. Stanislaus ! this is indeed supreme audacity.

(Fred. and Will. with drawn swords turn on Boskay. A fierce struggle ensues. Finally Boskay drives them from the park and follows. The Empress eagerly watches the combatants and exclaims:)

May heaven protect thee thou brave Hungarian.
See ! how his noble arm swings the bright sword,
Every blow of which making victory more assured.
Be steadfast Boskay. Ah ! what a tremendous stroke,
Prostrating one of the villains, leaving but one to battle with.
Now the enemy is finished and the offer of an indignity to Austria's Empress
Fearfully avenged. *(Enter Boskay.)*

(Boskay.) Be composed most gracious Majesty.
I have slain both your assailants, and now that all danger
To your august person is past permit me to retire ;
As news defining Hungaria's attitude towards Austria
May arrive at any moment, and which having received
I will at once convey to your Majesty.

(Empress.) Our sincere thanks, brave Boskay. And now, before—oh !—what a strange feeling overcomes me. Everything is growing dark. Please assist me. Agnes ! where is Agnes ? Oh !
(Empress sinks exhausted into a chair and faints. Boskay runs to her assistance.)

(Boskay.) This is very unfortunate just at this moment.

(Enter Agnes hastily.) Has anyone called me ?—Heavens ! what has befallen her Majesty ?

(Boskay.) Pardon fair lady, the Empress has suddenly taken ill.

(Enter Francis.) What can possibly detain Maria for so long a time. The Ambassador from Prussia is waiting and is growing impatient. Heaven ! yonder she is. What is the matter ? Maria ! Maria ! speak to me. I am Francis. Agnes find the Doctor at once.

(*Agnes.*) Yonder he is. I will call him. Doctor! doctor Augustinus Haversack, come quickly.

(*Enter Doctor hastily.*)

(*Agnes.*) Quick, quick dear good Doctor. The Empress is ill. (*Doctor approaches the Empress.*)

(*Doctor.*) Pardon me Sir Duke. (*Attends the Empress.*) — Nothing serious. Simply a case of complete exhaustion caused by a reaction consequent upon great excitement. The Empress will soon recover. There, there it is all over.

(*Empress.*) Ah, Francis! you here? How fortunate. Now I feel secure. Our sincere thanks are due to Count Boskay for liberating us from the hands of two unscrupulous villains who were about to attack our person to secure the document.

(*Francis to Boskay.*) My noble lord, in the name of Austria, I thank you for your valorous deed.

(*Boskay.*) Sir, I did but my duty and am thankful to heaven for my timely presence. With her Majesty's kind permission I will now retire.

(*Empress.*) Not until you accept this as a memento of this memorable day. (*Boskay kneels while the Empress decorates him with a gold chain and cross.*)

(*Boskay.*) Too much honor your Majesty for one so unworthy.

(*Empress.*) Most worthy indeed. Once again our sincere thanks.

(*Boskay.*) This is too much happiness! (*Exit Boskay.*)

(*Francis.*) How happy I am to see you better. Your long absence alarmed us. Remember Maria, the Ambassador from Prussia is waiting. (*Enter Bartenstein hastily.*)

(*Bartenstein.*) Pardon me your Highness, but really the Ambassador is waiting and growing impatient. It is long past the time appointed for his reception.

(*Empress.*) Yes, yes, the delay was caused by a very distressing incident. Let us go at once. (*All present but the Doctor make ready to go.*)

(*Doctor.*) Only one moment. Hem, hem, perhaps your Majesty and other dignitaries would like to hear my latest entitled, how to preserve the empire. (*Produces a huge manuscript.*)

(*Burtenstein aside.*) The Lord have mercy on us now.

(*Agnes aside.*) More trouble. One calamity upon another.

(*Francis aside.*) How supremely impudent!

(*Empress*) Sir Bartenstein, how is it? Which is the most important? The Doctor's latest or the relief of the Ambassador?

(*Bartenstein.*) Really most gracious Majesty, your relief from the Doctor I consider just now the most important.

(*Agnes aside.*) Ha! ha! ha! My sentiments precisely.

(*Francis.*) Remember Maria, the Ambassador is waiting.

(*Doctor.*) I will begin at once.

(*Empress.*) One moment. I am as it were in a dilemma. I am obliged to choose between two evils. I must either listen to the good Doctor's latest, or give an audience to a person whose master I very much dislike. Of the two evils I will choose the lesser, and — pardon me dear Doctor, — grant the audience.

(*Exit all but Doctor.*)

(*Agnes to Doctor while going out:*) Farewell Doctor Augustinus Haversack. The fountain of youth is still dropping. come and rejuvenate.

(*Doctor.*) Humph. So the Empress found herself in a dilemma. She was apparently obliged to choose between two evils. My great essay, how to preserve the Empire, an evil? It was ever thus. Genius is never recognized until too late. My case precisely. My essay an evil? Humph. Quite a doubtful compliment.

(*Exit Doctor.*)

(Enter Count Gotter, Prussian Ambassador to the Court of Austria, and Count Wasner.)

(Gotter.) I assure you, Sir Wasner, this delay is positively annoying. It is now two hours beyond the time appointed for my reception, and still no sign that I will be received. My treatment since my arrival presages a very cold and indifferent reception. Really, Sir Wasner, I regard this delay as a deliberate insult to my king.

(Wasner.) Patience my dear Sir Gotter. I beg you to have only a little longer patience. The delay is not intentional but rather unavoidable. The Empress is deeply impressed with the great importance of your high mission. Only a little longer patience. Why sir, a diplomat should not know impatience. I regret that my company failed to allay your anxiety. Come let us take a stroll in the park, perhaps the beauties of nature will amuse you.

(Gotter.) I trust that my impatience did not offend. But really, I have waited for two hours. Remember Sir, I am representing my royal king and who would think of making a king wait for even two moments. *(Enter Doctor.)*

(Wasner aside.) Confounded! there comes that intolerable literary nuisance.

(Gotter aside.) A most impudent interruption.

(Doctor.) Pardon me, Sir Wasner, but perhaps I can assist you in amusing your friend by reading the very latest production of my pen.

(Wasner.) I dare say you could. Your productions are generally very amusing.

(Doctor.) Ah, thank you. *(Aside.)* Quite a doubtful compliment. *(To Gotter.)* I am Doctor Augustinus Haversack, medical advisor of the Empress, and,—in all modesty be it said,—Art critique and Historian. I am glad to meet you. *(Extends his hand. Count Gotter gives him a look of supreme contempt, ignoring the proffered hand. To Wasner:)* A most impudent interruption.

(*Wasner to Doctor with sarcasm.*) Doctor Augustinus Haversack, Medical advisor, Art critique and Historian; I very much regret that just at present we are neither in need of medicine, criticism or historic information; but are very much in need of rest, unconditional rest. (*To Gotter.*) This way, if you please. The moment for your reception has come. This way Sir Gotter, if you please.

(*Exit Wasner and Gotter.*)

(*Doctor.*) Unconditional rest. — Exactly, — hem, — exactly. — Yes, yes. — Precisely, precisely so. In other words, your literary gas, Doctor, is very offensive. I must admit that all my efforts to administer it has been hitherto singularly unsuccessful. — Her Majesty, the Empress, Minister Bartenstein, and all the members of the Court, while they are very attentive to all my medical advice, utterly ignore me as an authority upon Art and History. Doctor, perhaps, after all your experience, were it not better to stick to your last? Let Art severely alone. It is not your element. Let History speak to each person for itself. Medicine, pure and simple medicine, that is where you are at home, and henceforth dear old Esculapius shall be my sole companion. Vale! Art. — Vale! History. — Vale! to all but the chosen profession of my youth. Unconditional rest. — That was a whole volume of advice, and, though hard to acknowledge, a salutary, but very doubtful compliment.

(*Exit Doctor.*)

(*Music is heard. The grand entrance of the throne room opens. Enter the royal procession, consisting of civil and military officers, maids of honor, pages, etc. Empress enters and ascends the throne. She is attired with the crown and mantle of St. Stephen. When all present have taken their position, a herald enters.*)

(*Herald.*) If it please your Majesty, Sir Count Gotter, Ambassador of his Highness the king of Prussia, awaits your gracious pleasure.

(*Empress.*) We are pleased to receive Sir Gotter. Conduct him in our presence. (*Exit herald. He returns immediately accompanied by Bartenstein, Wasner and Sir Gotter. They approach the throne.*)

(*Bartenstein.*) If it please your Highness, I have the honor to present Sir Count Gotter, Ambassador of his royal Majesty the king of Prussia.

(*Empress.*) We are pleased to hear Sir Gotter.

(*Count Gotter.*) Peace and good will towards the House of Hapsburgh. Thus my royal king greets Austria's young and most accomplished sovereign. The king presents his sincere and heartfelt wishes for your Majesty's welfare, And is deeply anxious that sweet peace may forever reign Throughout all your land. And upon the covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction He invokes the blessings of the King of Kings and devoutly prays That throughout all your reign it may remain unbroken.

(*Empress.*) How well your king has taught you to pray. To listen to your devout invocation for our welfare, Is to be almost persuaded that your saintly king abhors hypocrisy. That he is the very soul of sincerity. That he despises the empty pomp and vanity of all earthly power, And only strives for a crown of celestial glory. His pious call upon the King of Kings is base mockery When compared with the evidence of his foul treachery. Behold! (*The Empress holds forth the document.*)

(*Sir Gotter.*) Base treachery! My king a hypocrite? Oh, Majesty! you have been deceived.

(*Empress.*) Sir Bartenstein, take the document and reveal its contents to Sir Gotter, and thereby convince him that Prussia's king is indeed a hypocrite and arch deceiver. (*Bartenstein takes the document and shows its contents to Sir Gotter, who seems amazed beyond expression.*)

(*Empress.*) What now Sir Gotter, is not that a royal brotherhood of treachery? (*Count Gotter remains silent and bows his head with shame.*)

(*Empress.*) Ah! Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony. How vain, how vain will your intrigues prove. Like a brood of thieves you have lurked to pluck

From Austria's crown its most cherished laurels.
May you beware, for oft the Earth had woman
Who like men swayed their country's shield.
I am such woman! I too a shield will sway,
So help me Jehovah, in defence of my Austria.
Be witness Sir Gotter, (*Empress draws the sword*) see! by the sword of
St. Stephen,

Austria's Empress now does swear
That all Earth combined shall not, nay dare not
Her just and lawful rights impair.

(*End of Act Third.*)

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

(Grand Ancestral Hall of the Hungarian diet in the city of Pressburgh, Hungaria. The hall contains a throne and all the necessary implements for the reception of royalty. Bartenstein and Wasner busily engaged in conversation.)

(Bartenstein.) Really Count Wasner, ever since the Empress so summarily dismissed Count Gotter, Ambassador of his royal highness the king of Prussia, and her subsequent positive refusal to negotiate with Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony with reference to the surrender of parts of Austria's dominion, especially Silesia, the condition of the empire has daily grown more desperate and deplorable. The combined forces of the enemy have concentrated against the House of Hapsburgh, and though our troops, encouraged by the lofty patriotism and indomitable will of the Empress have fought most bravely, yet have they by virtue of the enemy's superior numbers been defeated in well nigh every instance, and the waves of misfortune have so steadily and with such force beaten against the Austrian Ship of State that only a miracle can save it from becoming a total wreck. It is true that from the beginning I counseled her Majesty to resist every attempt to infringe upon her royal rights and prerogatives, but now that I plainly see the coming disaster, it would be folly to farther encourage resistance, and therefore, I have fully determined to advise her Majesty that in my humble judgment it would be political suicide to longer oppose the combined strength of the Powers arrayed against the House of Hapsburgh.

(Wasner.) And have you really the courage to advise her Majesty to that effect?

(Bartenstein.) I am determined, because I deem it my duty to the State.

(Wasner.) Have you my noble friend considered that your advice may induce her Majesty to depose you from your exalted position of Prime Minister?

(Bartenstein.) I have thought of everything and am prepared for all the consequences. It is true that the Empress builds greatly upon Count Boskay and expects through his influence to win back the full confidence of the Hungarian nobility. But, my dear Wasner, building upon Boskay, and expecting the aid of Hungaria has been going on too long already, and even now that the State is on the verge of ruin, nothing positive concerning Hungaria's intention is known. Therefore, why wait longer when delay is so dangerous?

(Wasner.) I too feel that Austria's liberator, should he actually come, dare not delay his appearance lest all will be lost. For myself dear Bartenstein, I care nothing. But our poor forsaken Empress. Her unfortunate condition pierces my very soul. The unaccountable and singular misfortunes that have befallen the Imperial army from the very beginning of the present conflict, weigh most heavily upon her Majesty's great and heroic soul. The bloody wounds inflicted upon the people have lacerated her patient heart, and often in the silence of the night when all the land is wrapt in slumber, Austria's Empress lies prostrate before Jehovah's throne, fervently praying that the rod of chastisement may be speedily withdrawn. Should Boskay and his brave countrymen be destined by Heaven to come to Austria's rescue, then I too pray that they may come quickly. (*Enter Doctor, slowly in deep thought, without his usual manuscript.*)

(Bartenstein.) May Heaven speedily grant the petition of her Majesty. But see, yonder comes the Doctor. Can I trust my eyes? As I live, he is without his customary manuscript. Well, that is one consolation. Perhaps his last experience with Count Gotter and yourself has opened his eyes.

(Wasner.) The kind old man's heart is evidently full of compassion for the Empress.

(Doctor not aware of the presence of Bartenstein and Wasner.)

My beloved Empress. How your condition troubles me. When during the watch of the night I gazed upon your pallid and still beautiful countenance and there saw the deep lines which the finger of suffering had traced: there came to me as in a dream the remembrance of the days of your childhood; the remembrance of the golden and glorious years of your youth. Once again I beheld you throwing yourself into the arms of your old friend to be tossed to and fro and round and round in merry circles. Once again I pictured your little head with its wealth of flowing tresses resting upon my shoulders, while your young heart poured into my confidence all its fancied sorrow and grievance. And thus while revelling in the sunshine of your past, the darkness of your present was suddenly realized, when in restless slumber you again, and again cried out: "What may the future have in store for me? Oh, my people! could I but save my beloved Austria!"

(Bartenstein and Wasner.) What a sad picture of our beloved Empress. *(Bart. to Doctor.)* Pardon, dear Doctor. Pray tell us the true condition of the Empress.

(Doctor.) Ah, good friends, sad, very sad indeed. Her Highness is suffering mentally not physically. A deep melancholy seems to have taken the place of her former lofty courage.

(Bartenstein.) Silence! see yonder the Empress.

(Enter Empress dressed in deep mourning. She is not aware of the presence of any one. In her hands she carries a crown and scepter.)

(Wasner in a low voice.) Great God! what a change in her appearance.

(Wasner, Bartenstein and the Doctor remain motionless, watching the Empress who has assumed a thoughtful position.)

(Empress) How vain, how vain all human speculation.
Crown and Scepter! how humane, just and charitable
When resting on a deserving honest head,

And in a helpful generous hand.
Crown and scepter!—how oppressive and heavy
When placed upon a brow full of foul ambition
And in the grasp of unrelenting selfishness,
Crown and scepter!—how oft' in days of happy childhood
When each dawning morn brought continuance of purest joy,
I would furtively glance at those emblems of glory and power
Inwardly saying: I would you were mine.
And how with my nurse—God rest her sweet soul,—
I would plead so ardently to attire me in imperial robes,
Then with a childish pride I would imitate my fathers gait and gestures,
And with a heart replete with innocent exultation
Receive the homage of my darling little playmates.
Then I was happy,—but now?
How vain, how vain! all human speculation.

(The Empress falls into a chair, rests her head upon a table and weeps.)

(Wasner.) See! Austria's Empress weeps.

(The Doctor gently approaches the Empress.)

(Doctor.) Pardon me most gracious Majesty. You are in need of rest. Rest, rest both of body and mind are in your case absolutely necessary.

(The Empress rises suddenly in a state of surprise.)

(Empress.) Ah, Doctor! you here? And you Bartenstein? And you Count Wasner also? How glad I am to find myself in the company of good and true friends, since I am so sorely in need of friendship. What does it all signify? Have you news from Hungaria? I tell you Hungaria with divine assistance can alone save Austria. Oh Austria! beloved country, could I but help you.

(Bartenstein.) Hear me most gracious Majesty.
The momentous question: how to save the Empire.
My mind has given long and careful study
Coming at last to this conclusion:
That Austria compelled by force of circumstances must concede the Prussian's claim
And thereby make his aid and friendship positively sure.

(*Empress.*) That Austria should yield to Prussia?
Royalty yield to hypocrisy? Truth to falsity? Honesty to subtlety?
Accursed be the tongue giving such advice.
I charge you, Bartenstein, take back your counsel
For your tongue has uttered sentiments unworthy of an Austrian Statesman.
Oh, Bartenstein! has the serpent tongue of Frederick so charmed thy senses,
That now for his benefit you give us instruction
To commit Imperial treason?
Away! Nay stay until I whisper in your ear
That such an ruler who cowardly barter his dominion
Is but a Judas to his people.

(*Bartenstein.*) Command my resignation. Reduce me in station
Even to my former state, a poor plebeian
But rest assured most gracious majesty that in my humble judgment
My counsel if followed, will be for Austria's good.
The serpent tongue of Frederick has not reached my ear.
Nor have I counseled with any but my own conscience.
From the Spring time of youth until the very Winter of my days,
I have labored for Austria's glory:
And now that the evening of my busy life is drawing nigh,
And I must soon give an account of my earthly ministry,
To be accused by my Empress of advising Imperial treason,
Oh, Majesty! 't is hard, even more than I can bear.

(*Falls on his knees.*)

(*Empress aside.*) My faithful and venerable Bartenstein on his knees.
This is too much!

(*To Bartenstein.*) Arise! cease your lamentation. I am Empress!
And though the coming hour be the last of my reign,
Yet will I adhere to my resolution to reject
All proposals of Prussia's unscrupulous king.
And though I now believe that your advice was intended for Austria's good
Yet must I refuse to follow it.
Give me your hand. Let all be forgotten.
You have still our full confidence.

(*Bartenstein.*) Thanks, thanks most gracious Majesty.

(*Empress.*) Hark! what is that?

(*A chorus of voices is heard singing a wild war song as follows:*)

Hungaria, Hungaria thou shalt be free.
Our hearts blood thy sons will shed
Hungaria for thee.

(Enter Count Boskay in great haste.)

(Boskay.) Hear your Majesty the wild war song of my countrymen. At last I have at least partially succeeded in winning their good will towards Austria. They all are aflame with desire to hear from your lips the guarantee of the speedy restoration of Hungaria's former rights and privileges.

(The chorus again sing the same song.)

(Empress.) Hark! surely that is the sweetest music I heard since the day of my coronation. Go Sir Boskay, call hither your countrymen. I will retire to prepare for their reception, and while uttering Austria's guarantee, may Heaven grant my tongue the eloquence of sincerity and truth.

(Exit all but Boskay.)

(Enter a company of Hungarian noblemen dressed in flashy uniforms, large hats, and carrying large swords. While entering they sing the same war song.)

(First nobleman.) So this is the day appointed to hear from a woman's lips the assurance that Hungaria shall henceforth be permitted to rule without Austria's interference. Very generous indeed.

(Second nobleman.) Kings and Queens like other individuals when forced by sore distress will promise everything. Promises, empty promises. You all remember that Austria has during the last decade overflowed with promises towards Hungaria.

(All the noblemen.) Ha! ha! truly spoken.

(Third Hungarian.) I would not give a shake of my sword for promises made under the influence of misfortune and mental distress. No, not a shake of my sword.

(All of the Hungarians.) Ha! ha! truly spoken.

(First nobleman.) It is said that Maria Theresa is a woman of surpassing beauty and that her eloquence is quite irresistible. Therefore, my noble friends let us be careful lest perhaps the captivating grace of our lovely and handsome Queen may influence our judgment.

(*Second nobleman.*) And though she possessed the eloquence and charms of an angel, yet will I remain calm, cold and undisturbed in mind.

(*All of the Hungarians.*) Ha! ha! truly spoken.

(*Third nobleman.*) I for one have no confidence in the promise of woman and I tell you that my sympathy for Maria Theresa can only be enlisted because of the great injustice done by other Powers in breaking the covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction. Promises, bah, nonsense! Sympathy for a woman wronged can alone move me.

(*All the Hungarians.*) Ha! ha! truly spoken.

(*Boskay who during this time was standing apart from his countrymen, approaches and says:*) By my patron Saint Stanislaus! I tell you gentlemen, Maria Theresa is a woman of marvelous strength of character. Please, please my friends have a little patience, wait and see.

(*All of the Hungarians.*) Ha! ha! Brother Boskay is evidently in love with his young sovereign.

(*Boskay.*) Yes, I do love her purity of motive and manly courage in defending her rights.

(*All the Hungarians.*) Ha! ha! Brother Boskay, bravely spoken. Let us again sing. (*All sing.*)

Hungaria, Hungaria, thou shalt be free.
Our heartsblood thy sons will shed
Hungaria for thee.

(*Enter a herald.*)

(*Herald*) If it please the noble Lords, her Majesty the Empress is now ready to be heard.

(*Enter Empress attired with the royal crown and mantle of St. Stephen. In her arms she carries her infant son Joseph. She is attended by Bartenstein, Wasner, Doctor, Duke Francis and Agnes. At sight of the Empress all of the Hungarians remove their hats and assume a semi kneeling position.*)

(*First nobleman in a low voice.*) Truly she is a woman of majestic presence.

(*Second nobleman.*) The very incarnation of grace and beauty.

(*Boskay approaches the throne.*) I have longed for this opportunity, most gracious Majesty, to present to you my honored countrymen.

(*Empress.*) Yes, and most happy am I to salute you all as my countrymen also.

Arise my noble Lords! make straight your forms, unbend your knees
That I might see you face to face,
And now I beg you hear me while I plead my case.
No sooner had I obtained possession of Austria's throne
When forthwith a conspiracy was formed to defeat my rights.
Bavaria, France, Saxony and above all the crafty Prussian,
Solemnly agreed that to uphold the covenant of the Pragmatic Sanction,
Would prove detrimental to their petty kingdoms.
With impudence unbounded Prussia demanded surrender of Silesia:
While France with customary arrogance would have no less
Than Luxemburgh and all the Austrian Netherlands.
In consideration of the German Imperial crown, Albert of Bavaria
Promised to assist in discrowning a daughter of the House of Hapsburgh.
Therefore, driven into self defense by such unscrupulous Powers,
We at once resolved to resist these robber monarchs even unto death.
Misfortune has followed our arms, city after city has fallen,
And to-day your Queen knows not whence to fly for refuge.
Hear me Hungarians!
Shall future generations accuse your Queen of cowardly laying her crown
At the feet of Bavaria, Prussia, France and Saxony?
Or is it not far better to die conscious of our right?
Will you brave Hungarians die with us rather than suffer our defeat,
And thus live on forever in the annals of your country's history?
Should victory attend your banners as I truly believe it will,
Hungaria shall be free to rule and govern as of yore.
This I promise on the honor of a woman, mother and Queen.
Behold! (*holds forth her son*) pure as the innocent heir of Austria's crown
My motives and intentions are. Will you accept our guarantee?

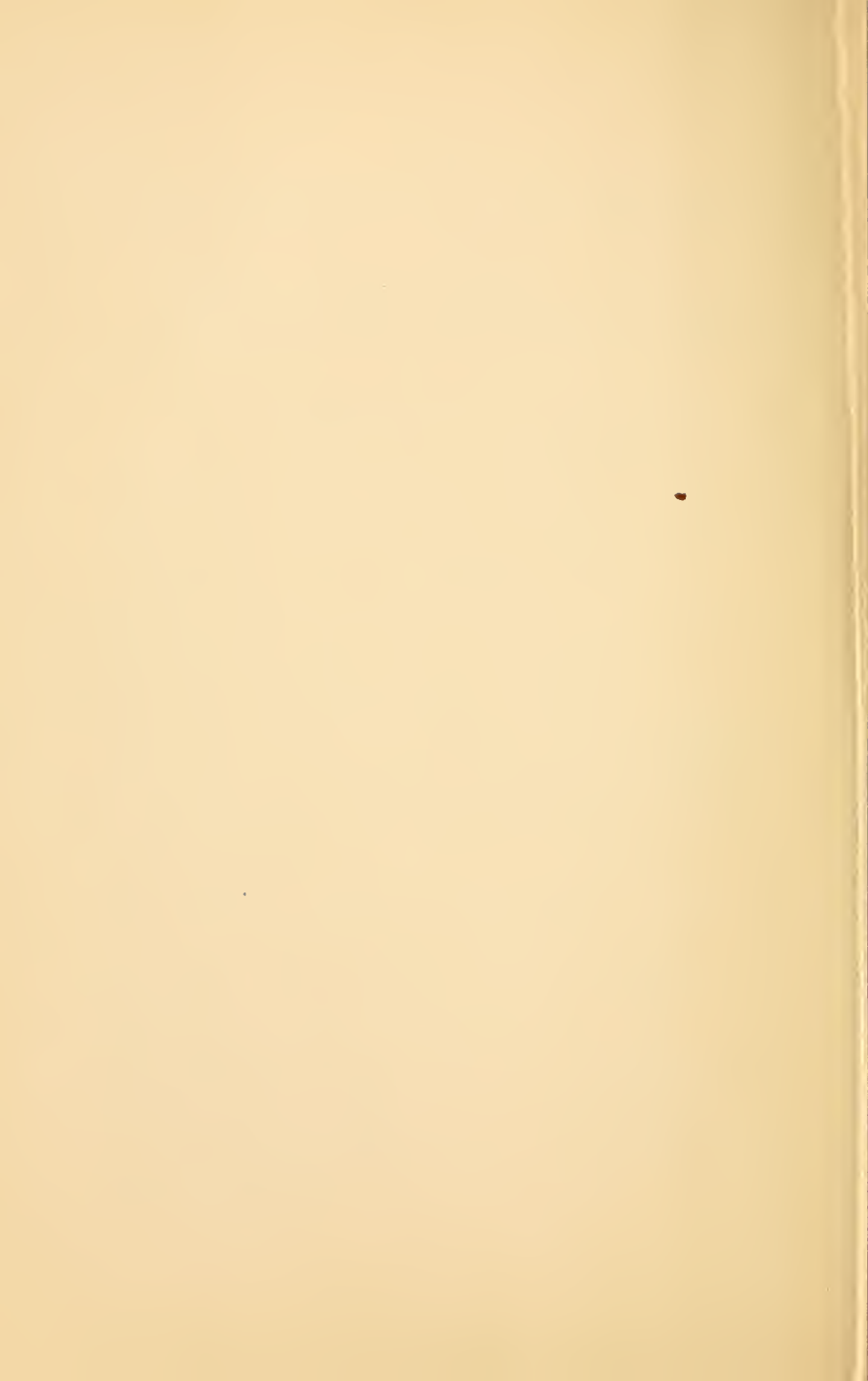
(*All the Hungarians draw their swords and brandishing them cry out with one voice:*)

Morianur pro rege nostro! We will die for our King! *Morianur pro rege nostro!*

(*Doctor aside.*) A most decided and undoubtful compliment.

(*Empress*) *Morianur pro rege nostro!* Oh, happy salutation,
Giving new hope and new desire to our weary ministry.
Weary? No, not longer weary.
Go Bartenstein, proclaim unto all our people
That a new day has broken for the House of Hapsburgh.
That over the ruins of the past a new Austria shall arise,
And that soon throughout all our land
Peace, sweet peace shall reign for evermore.
This also to all our people say:
God and Hungaria alone saved the day!

(*The End.*)





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